

RECREATION OUTDOORS COALITION
4000 Beacon Drive
Anderson, CA 96007

August 20, 2009

J. Sharon Heywood
Forest Supervisor
Shasta-Trinity National Forest
3644 Avtech Parkway
Redding, CA 96002

Subject: Forest DEIS for Motor Vehicle Travel Management

Dear Supervisor Heywood:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Motor Vehicle Travel Management. Recreation Outdoors Coalition (ROC) is a non-profit organization created to promote responsible access, multiple use, stewardship, tolerance and safety for those recreating on our public lands. We support local, State and federal land management policies while advocating environmentally sustainable recreation use.

ROC has, in general, been very supportive of route designation. We believe a well designed and managed, sustainable off-highway vehicle (OHV) program is necessary to provide quality riding experiences on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest (STNF). After review of the DEIS, we recommend your staff analyze a new alternative to comply with National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and to provide a better balance between motor vehicle access, affordability and environmental stewardship.

1) General Comments on the DEIS

- a) Impacts have not been fully evaluated for some resources such as Cultural Resources, Non-native Invasive Plants, and Transportation Management due to lack of field surveys or engineering analyses. We suspect you will amend the alternatives and your effects analysis or consider new alternatives based on the public comments you receive on the DEIS. To this end, ROC requests you provide a minimum 45 day public comment period on the FEIS prior to issuing the Record of Decision (ROD). This will provide the public with another opportunity to review the changes in the FEIS and to submit their comments for your consideration in the ROD.¹
- b) 1,252 miles of unauthorized routes were inventoried in the STNF. Appendix A, Route Specific Data, lists all unauthorized routes that were analyzed as proposed additions to the National Forest Transportation System (NFTS) under one of the four action alternatives. Under Alternative 5, a total of 106.12 miles of

¹ Based on our comments in this letter, ROC believes the STNF should issue a supplemental DEIS that provides the information currently missing and analyzes at least one more alternative.

unauthorized routes (just 8.4 percent of the inventory of 1,252 miles) were analyzed for this project.² Many routes submitted by ROC on September 18, 2008 were, apparently, not evaluated by your interdisciplinary team such as BC004, JG327, JM178, N752, N754, PM72, etc. in Appendix G: Route Disposition. The DEIS states:

“All comments were analyzed to identify significant issues associated with the proposed action, and to ensure analysis of a full range of alternatives to address those issues. The Forest continued public collaboration in subsequent months, meeting in November 2008 with scoping respondents to clarify specific route requests included in their written comments submitted during the scoping period.”³

“After the scoping period concluded, the Forest Service reviewed and gave due consideration to all proposals submitted by the public. The interdisciplinary team compiled all route requests and conducted a comprehensive and integrated screening process to identify which routes could be brought forward for further study in an alternative.”⁴

ROC was not aware of or invited to the November 2008 meeting with the OHV community. We are a local recreation group and have asked repeatedly to sit down with the STNF’s interdisciplinary team to develop a travel management alternative that would best meet the purpose and need in the Forest’s Notice of Intent (NOI) to:

“Provide wheeled motorized access to dispersed recreation opportunities . . .
Provide a diversity of wheeled motorized recreation opportunities . . .”

Approximately 618 routes are listed in Appendix G. Please display all routes (unauthorized and NFTS) requested by the public so they understand why most were eliminated from detailed study and not proposed for designation. The analysis does not conform with NEPA regulations to describe the reasons for eliminating routes.

One reason for eliminating many routes in Appendix G was “no access to water or documented dispersed site; no loop opportunity.” Other reasons included “crosses other jurisdiction” or “access to private lands” or “no connection to NFTS or proposed route.” These routes were submitted by the public for a reason. They exist on the ground and show evidence of motor vehicle use. There is no information in the DEIS if you contacted the requester to determine why a route was important and how it could be used to create loop opportunities or to provide access to a desired location. There is no information if the private landowner was contacted for authorization to use a route that crosses private land. This kind of collaboration is needed during travel management planning.

- c) There is an inadequate range of alternatives to meet the purpose and need of the NOI. The four action alternatives propose to designate between 0 to 8.4 percent

² DEIS, Volume 2, Appendix A

³ DEIS, Volume 1, page 15.

⁴ DEIS, Volume 2, Appendix G.

(0 to 106 miles) of your total unauthorized routes (1,252 miles) and allow motor vehicle access to 0 to 223 dispersed recreation sites (out of 5,219).

ROC requests the STNF analyze a new alternative (#6) that would provide a better balance between public access and environmental stewardship. These two goals are not mutually exclusive. Our organization has developed a set of “Proven Principles” that will result in good travel management plans when there is effective collaboration with interested parties (Exhibit 1).

2) Motorized Mixed Use on Other Public Roads through the Shasta-Trinity National Forest

A key objective of travel management planning is: “To coordinate travel planning and analysis on NFS lands with federal, state, county and other local governmental entities and tribal governments and to allow the public to participate in the designation of NFS roads, NFS trails, and areas on NFS lands for motor vehicle use.”⁵

Collaboration with other road management agencies is critical for the development of sound NF travel management plans. ROC is working with many counties to designate all unpaved county roads through NFS land for motorized mixed use unless an exception exists for public safety, past accidents, resource impacts, user conflicts or other considerations that cannot be mitigated. Our goal is to have an interconnected transportation system for non-highway legal vehicles using unpaved county and National Forest System (NFS) roads. If County Boards choose to designate mixed use on their unpaved roads, please review the STNF’s final designations to provide a seamless transportation system for the riding public.

Consistency with local plans such as county general plans or adjacent national forest plans is not discussed in the DEIS. The reader is unsure if the STNF collaborated with affected counties and adjacent national forests. Please include this information in the FEIS.

3) Motorized Mixed Use on Unpaved National Forest System Roads

ROC asserts unpaved NFS roads are not “highways.” Our analysis of the Region’s mixed use policy and the California Vehicle Code supports this recommendation.

California Vehicle Code:

The Pacific Southwest Regional Forester has said all NFS passenger car roads (maintenance level 3-5) are “highways” under the California Vehicle Code (CVC). This conflicts with the December 19, 2007 letter from the California Highway Patrol (CHP).

Forest Service Manual (FSM) 7740.5 (8/24/2000) defines a “forest highway” as:

“Forest Highway. A designated forest road under the jurisdiction of, and maintained by, a public authority that is subject to the Highway Safety Act.”

Roads subject to the Highway Safety Act (HSA) have to meet certain safety standards

⁵ Forest Service Manual 7702, Objectives (effective 01/08/2009).

as defined in FSM 7733 and Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 7709.59, 40. The HSA, however, does not prevent the Forest Service from designating these roads for travel by non-highway legal vehicles.

The term “forest highway” is used, again, in Forest Service Manual 7741.1, which states:

“Forest highways are a special classification of forest roads. They are specifically designated State or local government roads that meet the criteria listed in 23 CFR 660.105. The designation of forest highways is not intended to form a ‘system’ of roads. Instead, the purpose of the designation is to identify State and local government roads that qualify for construction and reconstruction funding under the forest highway program.

To qualify for designation as a forest highway, a forest road must:

- 1) Be a State or local government road that is open to the general public. A forest development road may have the designation of a forest highway, provided that the Forest Service assures the Federal Highway Administration that a State or local government agency will assume jurisdiction and maintenance responsibility upon completion of improvements.
- 3) Serve one or more of the following uses:
 - a) Local needs, such as schools, mail delivery, commercial supply, and private property within the National Forest System.” (Underlining added for emphasis.)

In reference to “forest highways,” Forest Service Manual 7703.3 says:

“Wherever possible, transfer jurisdiction over an NFS road and associated forest transportation facilities (FSM 7705) to the appropriate public road authority when the road meets any of the following criteria:

- a) More than half of the traffic on the road is not related to administration and use of NFS lands.
- b) The road is necessary for mail, school, or other essential local governmental purposes.
- c) The road serves yearlong residents within or adjacent to NFS lands.”

R5 Regional Engineer George Kulick confirmed the description of “highways” in the Forest Service Manual:

“In California, we have about 3,000 miles of Forest Highways officially identified. These highways are generally state or county roads that serve to connect National Forests.”⁶

“Road” is the only term used throughout the FS directives. By its own Manual direction, the Forest Service manages roads, not highways. Any link to the CVC term “highway” is incorrect. Only State and local agencies manage highways.

Unpaved NFS roads (regardless of maintenance level) are not considered “highways” under CVC 38001, which states: “For the purposes of this division, the term ‘highway’ does not include fire trails, logging roads, service roads regardless of surface composition, or other roughly graded trails and roads upon which vehicular travel by the public is permitted.” CVC 38026 generally applies to paved highways. OHV travel on unpaved NFS roads is legal.

⁶ E-mail from George Kulick to Elizabeth Norton, dated April 6, 2009.

The Deputy Commissioner of the California Highway Patrol sent a clarifying letter to the R5 Regional Forester on December 19, 2007, which said in part:

“We are not familiar with all the ML 3 Forest Service roadways, but if they are gravel or other dirt or unpaved roads that have been operating as mixed use roadways for years, it is our belief these roads would fall under the “roughly graded trails and roads upon which vehicular travel by the public is permitted” portion of Section 38001 VC and would, therefore, be eligible for your mixed-use definition.” (Underline added for emphasis.)

FS maintenance levels are irrelevant to the CHP and the public. The most distinguishing characteristic of a road is its surface composition. Is it paved or not? Unpaved NFS roads are not “highways” under the CVC.

In ROC’s view, most STNF roads are logging, fire or service roads and fall under the exemption from a “highway” in Section 38001 CVC. The DEIS confirms this:

“The predominant reason for constructing these roads was to support timber harvest.”⁷

“The NFTS was developed over many decades to meet a variety of needs including timber management, fuel treatment, access to private inholdings, fire control, utility management, special uses management and recreation.”⁸

These types of roads on the STNF are not “highways” under the CVC. They are logging, fire access, and service roads. We emphasize, again, the Forest Service manages roads, not highways.

Statements in the DEIS directly conflict with CHP’s December 19, 2007 interpretation of the CVC for FS unpaved passenger car roads. ROC reviewed the Travel Management DEIS for the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest, based out of Medford, Oregon in the Pacific Northwest Region or Region 6. This forest also manages public land in California. Their DEIS states:

“Portions of the Siskiyou Mountains and Wild Rivers Ranger Districts are located in California, which has similar (*traffic*) laws as Oregon. According to the California Highway Patrol (Farrow 2007), mixed use is allowed on unpaved maintenance level 3 roads (*passenger car roads*) ‘that have been operating as mixed use roadways for years’ under Section 38001 of the California Vehicle Code.”

Region 6 and the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest have the opposite interpretation of the CVC than Region 5. Region 6’s interpretation is consistent with the CHP’s December 19, 2007 letter to R5 Regional Forester Randy Moore. ROC asserts Region 5 should comply with CHP’s interpretation.

Since the CVC has not changed in 20 years and OHV use on unpaved maintenance level (ML) 3-5 roads is a longstanding, accepted practice on the STNF (and other national forests), why has the FS now determined these roads are “highways?” Prior to the Regional Forester’s mixed use policy letters, neither the public nor FS employees

⁷ DEIS, Volume 1, page 489.

⁸ DEIS, Volume 1, page 3.

described unpaved NFTS roads as “highways” unless they were specifically referring to Manual direction for “forest highways”. When the travel management planning process began under the 2005 Rule, these roads suddenly became “highways” subject to the CVC. Please explain the reason for this change in the FEIS and why there were no “combined use” concerns in the past.

Terminology in the Motorized Mixed Use Policy for the Pacific Southwest Region:

The Region 5 motorized mixed use policy cites the CVC for prohibiting non-highway legal vehicle travel on ML 3-5 roads. However, agencies may propose “combined use” on highway segments if the procedures in Section 38026 CVC are followed and the CHP concurs. Since the Regional Forester says ML 3-5 roads are subject to the CVC, then the correct term to permit non-highway legal vehicles on NFS “highways” is “combined use,” not mixed use. If a Forest Supervisor assumes supremacy over the CVC in the management of NFS passenger car roads, the correct term would be mixed use. If the Regional Forester accepted CHP’s interpretation that the CVC does not apply to unpaved ML 3-5 “roads,” then the correct term to permit non-highway legal vehicles on these roads is also mixed use.

Please use the correct term in reference to the CVC, which is “combined use.” The STNF is not proposing any mixed use roads.

Forest Service Passenger Car Roads:

ROC understands the FS definition of ML 3, 4, and 5 roads as being passenger car roads. However, our interpretation of current Forest Service Manual and Handbook direction is this: Prudent drivers of standard passenger cars, in nearly all cases, stay on ML 5 (paved) roads. We believe all paved (asphalt, chip seal, etc.) roads should be ML 5 roads.

Seventy-five percent of the Forest’s ML 3 roads (785 miles) are unpaved (native surface or gravel). Eighty-four percent of ML 3 roads are single lane with design speeds from 5-25 mph. Seventy-five percent have traffic service levels of C (flow interrupted, use limited) or D (slow flow or may be blocked) (Source: FSH 7709.56, 4.1, Exhibit 1; 4.2, Exhibit 5, and STNF INFRA Roads Data). Their functional class is generally local or collector roads. These ML 3 roads provide important links to the STNF’s maintenance level 2 road system and motorized trails. “Share the road” information, maps, speed limits, and/or road signs will greatly enhance visitor safety on all unpaved ML 3 roads designated for mixed use.

Based on a traffic survey ROC did on 72 miles of unpaved ML 3-4 roads on the Lassen National Forest in 2005, we believe almost all traffic on unpaved NFS passenger car roads is high clearance vehicles (pick up trucks, sport utility and trail rated vehicles). It is a misnomer for the FS to continue to refer to unpaved ML 3-4 roads as “passenger car roads.” The reference to “passenger car roads” is a carryover from the 1950’s when there were few high clearance, 4-wheel drive family vehicles (today’s sport utility vehicles and trucks). On the Lassen National Forest, only 10 percent of the use on ML 3-4 roads was actually passenger car. The rest were high clearance vehicles or non-highway legal vehicles.⁹

⁹ Lassen National Forest Traffic Study and Engineering Analysis, 2005.

The DEIS does not indicate if any traffic counts have been conducted to the level ROC provided for the Lassen NF in 2005. ROC has been unsuccessful in obtaining any engineering analyses or reports from the STNF to determine what traffic count and vehicle class (composition) data were used to evaluate your ML 3 roads for combined use. The DEIS says:

“When making any limited changes to National Forest System Roads, the Shasta-Trinity National Forest will also consider the following:

- Speed, volume, composition and distribution of traffic on roads.
- Compatibility of vehicle class with road geometry and road surfacing.”¹⁰

We note, the STNF is not proposing to lower any ML 3 roads to ML 2 high clearance roads. Absent recent and statistically valid traffic survey data and vehicle class information, ROC questions the need to maintain 785 miles of ML 3 “passenger car” roads on the STNF.

Engineering Analyses:

Under the Region’s current policy, Forest Supervisors are constrained from designating passenger car roads for combined use if road segments are greater than three miles (Section 38026 CVC). Forest Supervisors may exceed this length if they assume supremacy over the CVC in accordance with 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 212.5(a)(1) and the response to public comments to the 2005 Travel Management Rule, which state:

“Under the current rule, traffic on roads is subject to State traffic laws where applicable, except when in conflict with the Forest Service’s prohibitions at 36 CFR Part 261. If there is a conflict, the agency’s prohibitions preempt State traffic laws. To ensure that the agency’s intent with respect to designation of roads, trails, and areas is fully effectuated, the proposed and final rules also provide for preemption of State traffic laws when they conflict with those designations.”¹¹ (Underlining added for emphasis.)

Forest Service directives say:

“The use of motor vehicles on NFS roads is subject to State traffic law where applicable, except when in conflict with motor vehicle designations (36 CFR 212.51) or with the rules at Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 261 (36 CFR 212.5(a)(1)). On NFS roads, designations for motor vehicle use take precedence over conflicting State traffic laws. The Forest Service may designate some NFS roads under Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, section 212.51 as open to a vehicle class that would normally be precluded from public roads under State law (for example, NFS roads could be designated for all motor vehicles, where State law allows only highway-legal vehicles).”¹²

Per Forest Service national direction, an engineering analysis is required to assess the probability and severity of crashes on roads proposed for mixed use.¹³ Where the criteria in FSH 7709.55, 30.3 are met, the STNF may prepare an engineering judgment instead of an engineering report. These three criteria are:

¹⁰ DEIS, Volume 1, page 10.

¹¹ Federal Register, Vol. 70, No. 216, Rules and Regulations, November 9, 2005.

¹² Forest Service Manual 7731.2, #1 and #3 (effective 10/07/2008).

¹³ See EM-7700-30, “Guidelines for Engineering Analysis of Motorized Mixed Use on National Forest System Roads.”

“When all of the following conditions exist, a qualified engineer may document engineering judgment that an engineering report is not needed to designate a road for motorized mixed use:

- 1) The proposed designation is consistent with State and local law (*and it is for unpaved NFS roads regardless of maintenance level according to the CHP*).
- 2) The road being considered for designation currently has motorized mixed use.
- 3) There is no documented crash history involving motorized mixed use on the road or similar roads in the vicinity.”¹⁴

The Regional Forester’s January 13, 2009 motorized mixed use letter of direction to the Forest Supervisors is a concern to ROC. The Region’s mixed use policy invalidates “combined use” proposals on passenger car roads greater than three miles unless you:

- 1) Lower the maintenance level;
- 2) Assume supremacy over (preempt) the CVC on these roads; or
- 3) Disregard the CVC.

Alternative 5 proposes to designate 30.41 miles as combined use highways pending approval from the Regional Engineer, Regional Forester’s Team and the Office of General Counsel.¹⁵ Proposing combined use designations requires conformance with Section 38026 CVC and review by the CHP.¹⁶ “Highway” segments must be less than three miles, which will prohibit non-highway legal vehicles on most unpaved ML 3 roads in the STNF.

The DEIS states:

“A decision to designate a section of ML 3-5 NPTS road for motorized mixed-use requires that the decision be informed by an engineering analysis conducted by a qualified engineer. Based on the analysis conducted, the qualified engineer will identify risks and prepare documentation for the appropriate responsible official. The analysis may include mitigation measures that would reduce the risk associated with designating the road for motorized mixed-use. The analysis is currently being prepared and the final results will be included in the Final EIS. Preliminary results are displayed in appendix C Motorized Mixed Use.”¹⁷

ROC requested a copy of the preliminary engineering analyses, but was denied.¹⁸ We have no way to evaluate how you approached this task or what criteria were used to establish the rankings in Appendix C. Please explain why only 30.41 miles out of 785 miles (3.9 percent) of ML 3 roads were considered for combined use.

Without the completed engineering analyses, the public has no way of knowing how many of the 30.41 miles of proposed ML 3 combined use roads will be designated for non-highway legal vehicle travel until the FEIS is issued. The preliminary crash probability and crash severity rankings (moderate or high risk) in Appendix C may eliminate many of these roads for combined use. Except for the Lassen NF and STNF,

¹⁴ Forest Service Handbook 7709.55, 30.3, #5 (effective 01/08/2009).

¹⁵ Regional Forester’s letter, dated January 13, 2009.

¹⁶ CHP Memorandum, dated January 13, 2009.

¹⁷ DEIS, Volume 1, page 487.

¹⁸ E-mail from Environmental Coordinator Robert Remillard to Elizabeth Norton, dated August 3, 2009.

all other forests have provided their draft engineering analyses for ROC to review when their DEISs were released. The fact that none of these analyses are final indicates the Region's mixed use policy cannot be implemented in a timely manner for the public to evaluate and comment on them.

Engineering analyses require the concurrence of the Regional Engineer and his staff as well as approval by the California Highway Patrol.¹⁹ If the Regional Forester continues to adhere to the Region's mixed use policy, Forest Engineers will have to expend considerably more time and funds preparing combined use proposals that conform with Section 38026 CVC. With current budget constraints as well as staffing shortages, we doubt many roads will be forwarded to CHP. The two tier review/approval process has created a serious bottleneck that the Regional Forester did not anticipate. We also doubt the CHP has the personnel or funds to review many of these analyses. ROC has yet to see an acceptable combined use assessment in any of the DEISs we have read that meets CVC requirements.

ROC recommends the STNF reclassify many of Forest's unpaved ML 3 roads to ML 2 to allow mixed use and to reduce road maintenance costs. Most of these roads are single lane, slow speed roads (25 mph or less) with low traffic volumes and traffic service levels of B, C and D. Setting road maintenance levels and changing maintenance levels are administrative and not subject to NEPA. The Regional Forester's January 13th letter describes the steps for reclassifying passenger car roads to ML 2. He is encouraging Forest Supervisors to consider this action.

Fire access has been used as one argument against re-classifying ML 3 roads to ML 2, high clearance roads. Fire access is very important, but ROC disagrees with this argument. Most fire engines are 4-wheel drive and designed to travel on just about any road, including cross-country travel. Fire access should seldom be used as a reason to keep roads at a higher maintenance level. Air tankers and helicopters are often the fastest way to initiate fire suppression efforts.

If reclassification is not feasible, please analyze a new alternative that will designate all unpaved ML 3 roads for motorized mixed use, and prepare engineering judgments when the three criteria in FSH 7709.55, 30.3 are met. Explain why mitigations would not be effective if a road is not designated for motorized mixed use. Include all engineering reports in an Appendix to the FEIS so the reader understands why some roads may not be recommended for non-highway legal vehicle travel. Document which ML 3-5 roads have had motorized mixed use in the past and the volume of OHV use on those roads. Provide an opportunity for the public to review and comment on these analyses before they are finalized.

Public Safety on Mixed Use Roads:

ROC asserts the Forest Service does not have enough mixed use accident data from Region 5 national forests to adopt a regional policy that prohibits motorized mixed use on thousands of miles of unpaved passenger car roads in California. We found Region 5's mixed use accident information does not substantiate the agency's concern about public safety. In the past 15 years, there have been 11 mixed use accidents on 41,501

¹⁹ Regional Forester's letter, dated January 13, 2009 and CHP letter, dated January 13, 2009.

miles of NFTS roads in California.²⁰ Three accidents involved FS employees running into an OHV; one involved a County Deputy Sheriff hitting an OHV. The data does not indicate the road maintenance level where these accidents occurred. There have been no mixed use accidents on the STNF in the past 15 years (from Region 5 accident data). There is no accident information in the DEIS to support a prohibition of non-highway legal vehicles on unpaved passenger car roads. Please provide this in the FEIS to validate the agency's concern about public safety on STNF roads.

"On low-volume roads, crash history is seldom a reliable indicator of significant safety problems. Accordingly, use common sense and judgment to determine safety deficiencies and the priority for corrective action."²¹ Based on the Forest Service Handbook and Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), low volume roads are any roads with less than 400 average daily traffic (ADT).²² Unless a traffic study has been completed, we believe all STNF ML 3 roads have less than 400 ADT. Accidents related to human factors (alcohol, medical emergency, reckless driving, etc.), weather, time of day or mechanical failure may have nothing to do with road safety. The occurrence of an accident is not necessarily an indictment of the road or the public safety risk.

Keep in mind, dual sport bikes can still legally operate on ML 3-5 roads. Has the Region and STNF considered the safety risk of this use? It makes no sense to prohibit a green sticker dirt bike when a similar dual sport bike can use any road on the forest. Is the issue then the safety of minor operators? Please explain in the FEIS.

ROC asserts all unpaved ML 3 roads should be open to all vehicle classes unless a rare exception exists for some road segments due to public safety, past accidents, resource concerns, user conflicts or other considerations that cannot be mitigated. The DEIS admits OHV use is low on the STNF.²³ The Regional Forester should follow Forest Service national direction and the agency's own guidebook for analyzing mixed use on FS passenger car roads.

Minor Operators on Mixed Use Roads:

The CHP, State Off-highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division and ROC share equal concern with the Forest Service over the safety of minors driving non-highway legal vehicles on NFTS or other public roads. However, we believe State requirements for minor operators are sufficient.²⁴ This includes the provision to have a supervising parent or guardian with minor operators under age 14. The answer is not to eliminate this use, but to mitigate it in the best way possible. As an example, the FS does not prohibit hiking, mountain biking, skiing, snowboarding, rock climbing, hunting, firearm use, driving with street legal vehicles or other recreational activities on the national forests. There are risks associated with all of these sports and, yes, some fatalities. The Forest Service should manage OHV risk, not eliminate the activity or prohibit youth under 16 years from participating. (Even FS employees have motor vehicle accidents!)

There are numerous safety training programs for youth offered by the State, vehicle

²⁰ Region 5 mixed use accident data, 1993-2008.

²¹ Forest Service Handbook 7709.59, 41.7, #1.

²² Forest Service Handbook 7709.59, 41.4. Also MUTCD, Section 5A.01 Function, page 5A-1.

²³ DEIS, Volume 1, pages 75-77.

²⁴ CVC, Division 16.5, Off-highway Vehicles, Sections 38007, 38500-38505.

manufacturers, state-wide OHV organizations, and local OHV clubs. If there are continued safety concerns, the FS should approach the California Highway Patrol and State OHMVR Division to determine if State safety requirements for minors need to be strengthened.

In accordance with FSH 7709.59, 23, the STNF should impose temporary road closures for certain vehicle classes (i.e. OHVs) when commercial traffic is present, such as log haul during timber sales. This is an appropriate mitigation measure for public safety.

Please explain in the FEIS why the STNF believes the operation of non-highway legal vehicles on ML 3-5 roads is a public safety concern when there have been no mixed use accidents on any forest road. The discussion on pages 492 to 494 is inadequate.

4) Affordability Analysis and Road Maintenance Levels

The STNF currently manages and maintains approximately 5,332 miles of NFTS roads open to motor vehicle travel.²⁵ In addition, there are 1,252 miles of unauthorized routes.

The Forest Service Manual states:

“Consider maintenance and administrative obligations and capability in the context of future budgets and staffing. Administrative units and ranger districts should avoid adding routes to the forest transportation system unless there is adequate provision for their maintenance. Grants, agreements, and volunteers may be used to extend Forest Service resources.”²⁶

At the beginning of travel management planning, the Regional Forester’s August 21, 2006 letter to the Forest Supervisors said:

“Forests are encouraged to review the road management objectives for their road system during the designation process. Operation and maintenance of the road system should be sustainable with current budget realities and take into consideration the type of traffic the Forest wishes to authorize.”

The STNF’s August 8, 2008 Notice of Intent states:

In meeting the purpose and need, “. . . the proposed action must also achieve the following purposes:

- E. Provide for adequate maintenance and administration of designations based on availability of resources and funding to do so. Currently the Forest has a maintenance backlog for roads of approximately \$137,000,000. Future road and trail budgets are expected to decrease from current levels.”

Road management assumptions are discussed in the DEIS:

²⁵ DEIS, Volume 1, page 489.

²⁶ Forest Service Manual 7715.03, Policy, #6.

“The current proposal is just one of many in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest’s continuing effort to manage the transportation system in a sustainable and cost-effective manner.”²⁷

The DEIS is silent on how these goals and Manual direction will be met under the four action alternatives. In our September 18, 2008 response to the Notice of Intent, ROC requested you identify the significant issue of “Affordability” to develop the action alternatives. This recommendation was not included in the DEIS. While the Forest’s budget deficit is acknowledged in the NOI, there is no attempt to deal with it in any of the alternatives. The DEIS states:

“The National Forest System roads are designed, constructed, and maintained to provide access for the utilization and management of the national forest. The design and maintenance standards for these roads were developed to provide for public safety.”²⁸ (Underlining added for emphasis.)

ROC is concerned about the agency’s liability due to the lack of maintenance on NFTS roads. “An estimate of the deferred maintenance for roads on the Shasta-Trinity National Forests is \$216,885,117.”²⁹ Please explain why the Forest’s deferred road maintenance was \$137,000,000 in the August 2008 NOI, but is now 58 percent higher in the June 2009 DEIS.

The Forest’s projected outyear deferred maintenance need is not described and should be included in the FEIS. Table 3.11-1 displays the Forest’s annual estimated road maintenance costs. The cost to maintain a ML 3 road is 20 times the amount to maintain a ML 2 high clearance road (\$10,870 vs. \$543.33 respectively). The annual maintenance cost for a ML 4 road is over 26 times more expensive than a ML 2 road.³⁰

All alternatives require over \$17.7 million annually to maintain the STNF’s road system to standard compared to an average annual road maintenance budget of \$702,766.³¹ The cost to implement the travel management plan under Alternative 5 is an additional \$379,342.³² (Please breakout implementation and mitigation/monitoring costs separately in the FEIS. The DEIS does not display the mitigation/monitoring costs under each alternative.)

During the past four years (2005-2008), 12-14 percent of the STNF’s road system was maintained.³³ There is no information in the DEIS on the percent and miles of NFTS roads that currently meet their assigned road management objectives (RMO) and maintenance standards. With such a huge backlog of deferred road maintenance, RMO standards are certainly not being met at this time. Include specific information on the condition of STNF roads in the FEIS. The only information ROC could find in the DEIS

²⁷ DEIS, Volume 1, page 4.

²⁸ DEIS, Volume 1, page 489.

²⁹ DEIS, Volume 1, page 486.

³⁰ DEIS, Volume 1, page 486.

³¹ DEIS, Volume 1, pages 490 and 495. Costs are based on the last four years (2005-2008). Appendix F has different annual road maintenance costs (over \$15.7 million for each alternative). ROC is unsure which numbers are correct.

³² DEIS, Volume 1, page 498.

³³ DEIS, Volume 1, page 490.

that addresses the lack of routine road maintenance is generic and insufficient to meet NEPA requirements. The DEIS says:

“Costs for the NFTS include costs for needed maintenance work that has not been completed for various reasons (deferred maintenance) and costs of maintenance that should be performed routinely to maintain the facility to its current standard.”³⁴

“. . . if maintenance funding remains constant and use of NFTS roads and unauthorized roads and trails continues at current level, it is likely that the backlog of maintenance needs will continue to increase. This is a negative feedback cycle. If funding is available to maintain 14 percent of the NFTS roads and trails, then the unmaintained roads and trails have a higher probability of drainage or surface failures. Because these roads and trails were not maintained, the damage to roads and trails is more destructive. This type of damage is more expensive to repair than preventive maintenance, and will result in reducing the funds available for preventive maintenance.”³⁵

The environmental consequences section displays the funding gap between the STNF’s maintenance needs and anticipated annual maintenance budgets, but does not elaborate on the public safety, recreational, or resource consequences of this gap. Please discuss this in the FEIS.

The Regional Forester says unpaved ML 3 roads are highways subject to the CVC. How many of these ML 3 roads are meeting their RMO standards for maintenance and public safety? With the budget figures presented in the DEIS, we suspect these roads are becoming more roughly graded over time and fall under the exemption from a “highway” in Section 38001 CVC. The Regional Forester wants to have it both ways. He wants CHP to concur on combined use analyses to remove full culpability from the agency if there is a combined use accident. At the same time, the STNF cannot maintain your “highways” when the Forest has \$216,885,117 in deferred maintenance.

Reducing operational road maintenance levels should be seriously considered to bring the STNF’s road maintenance program in alignment with the Forest’s expected out year budgets. Describing road management objectives and re-classifying maintenance levels are administrative and not subject to NEPA. Since passenger car travel will not be prohibited and operators can choose to drive their passenger cars on ML 2 roads, NEPA is not required.

Consider the factors listed in FSH 7709.59, 62.31 when selecting maintenance levels. It makes little sense to keep roads at a higher maintenance level if passenger cars are a minor component of the traffic. ROC believes “prudent drivers in standard passenger cars” with P-rated tires almost always stay on paved roads. The primary vehicle class using the road should drive the assignment of operational road maintenance levels and not vice versa. ROC does not consider the STNF’s unpaved ML 3 roads to be passenger car roads or “highways.” Unless paved, they are becoming roughly graded roads as evidenced by your backlog of deferred maintenance. The lack of road maintenance is a serious liability issue for the agency.

³⁴ DEIS, Volume 1, pages 485-486.

³⁵ DEIS, Volume 1, page 498 under Alternative 5.

As an option to reduce your maintenance costs, temporarily raise the operational ML of a road to provide more economical commodity haul (or for some other management purpose), then lower the operational ML when the activity has ended. Consider converting some ML 2 roads with low use to motorized trails to further reduce your maintenance costs. ROC asserts your operational maintenance levels should be assigned commensurate with your use.

Another option is to close ML 2 roads that provide no recreational opportunity and serve no administrative purpose. ROC supports the closure of low use roads to reduce maintenance costs, reduce road densities in highly roaded watersheds and habitats, and mitigate resource concerns. These roads can be re-assigned from an objective ML 1 (closed) status to an operational ML 2 status if future project access is needed.

Please provide information in the FEIS about the actual traffic volume and vehicle classes using STNF passenger car roads to justify your road maintenance levels and “traffic service levels” in INFRA. Again, this will help the public understand the STNF’s need to maintain 785 miles of ML 3 passenger car roads.

ROC requests the STNF follow the criteria in FSM 7715.5 for roads when assigning road maintenance levels, which state:

- “In addition to the general criteria in FSM 7715.5, consider the following for NFS roads:
- a. Speed, volume, composition, and distribution of traffic on roads; and
 - b. Compatibility of vehicle class with road geometry and road surfacing.”³⁶

Absent traffic survey data, ROC highly recommends these steps to bring your road system in alignment with your projected annual road maintenance budgets:

- Set the operational maintenance level on all unpaved roads as ML 2.
- Begin monitoring actual use according to accepted protocols for traffic surveillance to determine volume, distribution and type of traffic actually flowing on STNF roads.
- Adjust the operational maintenance level up when passenger cars, recreational vehicles or cars pulling trailers exceed 50 percent of the total traffic on individual roads and the ADT is at least 100.

When motorized mixed use is designated on a road in California, State OHV Trust Funds may be used to maintain the road. They will help reduce the STNF’s backlog of road maintenance if the FS chooses to apply for these grants. This is another reason for lowering your maintenance levels and allowing mixed use.

Please address the opportunity to use volunteers to maintain roads if they are designated for mixed use (e.g. remove vegetation encroachment). Describe your current OHV volunteer program and its potential to assist with the Forest’s future road and trail maintenance through such programs as Adopt-a-Trail or Adopt-a-Road.

5) Parking and Dispersed Camping Off Roads

³⁶ Forest Service Manual 7715.5, #3.

The DEIS states:

“For each unauthorized route added to the NFTS as a road or trail for the purpose of accessing dispersed recreation, we assume a minimum of one site is accessed.”³⁷

Alternative 5 proposes to add 223 unauthorized routes to the NFTS. Under the above assumption, these routes access 223 dispersed recreation sites out of 5,219 routes that were inventoried (or 4.3 percent). Motor vehicle access will be prohibited to the remaining 95.7 percent of these sites, although walk-in access is allowed. None of the action alternatives meet your purpose and need to:

“Maintain wheeled motorized access to specific, well established dispersed recreation opportunities . . .”

And “. . . to provide a diversity of wheeled motorized recreation opportunities . . .”³⁸

ROC understands the STNF and other forests in Region 5 must complete their FEISs by January 2010. Strict adherence to this timeline is not required by law, regulation, policy or court order. ROC recommends the STNF team analyze the merits of each route that accesses a dispersed recreation site. If any routes are dropped from an alternative, display your rationale in an Appendix to the FEIS. There is insufficient analysis in the DEIS to explain why you are closing 95.7 percent of your dispersed sites to motor vehicles under Alternative 5, which is the Forest’s “maximum motorized recreation opportunities” alternative.

The STNF DEIS is the first one ROC has read where parking and dispersed camping are limited to one vehicle length from the edge of a designated route.³⁹ This implies one cannot even walk to set up their campsite beyond one vehicle length from a road or trail. Please explain your rationale for this proposed prohibition.

ROC urges continued motor vehicle access to all historically used dispersed recreation sites unless there is no evidence of recent use. The public does not want to stage one vehicle length from the edge of a road. They desire the security, privacy, solitude, and scenic amenities that these sites provide. If there were prior resource concerns, ROC assumes action would have been taken before now to address them. At some dispersed sites, please designate an area for vehicle parking to protect riparian areas, meadows or other sensitive resources. Monitor these sites to determine if other mitigation is required.

ROC recommends motor vehicle access for other dispersed camping (separate from historically used campsites) be permitted within 100 feet of a designated road, trail or OHV area when it is feasible to do so and does not cause damage to national forest resources or facilities. (Refer to FSM 7715.74 and FSM 7716.13.) Monitor impacts to see if access needs to be modified in some areas.

ROC recommends parking be permitted within 30 feet from any designated road, trail or open OHV area when it does not cause damage to national forest resources or facilities. This is consistent with the new FS travel management directives found in FSM 7716.1.

³⁷ DEIS, Volume 1, page 65.

³⁸ DEIS, Volume 1, pages 8-9.

³⁹ DEIS, Volume 1, pages 221, 325.

Regulations in 36 CFR 261.15 allow FS officers to issue violation notices for damage to national forest resources. Monitor use and determine if this length needs to be modified in some areas.

ROC disagrees with your analysis in the DEIS, which states:

“The interdisciplinary team considered camping within 100 feet of roads and trails; however, the responsible official found that corridors would not meet the intent of the Travel Management Rule because it would leave thousands of acres open to cross-country travel and would require extensive additional analysis. Potential impacts to cultural resources, threatened and endangered species, wildlife and other resources would need to be analyzed. Based on recent evaluations of timeline, budget and organization capacity constraints, it is not feasible for the Forest to complete the required site-specific analysis needed to implement a travel corridor.”⁴⁰

Motor vehicle access off road for parking and dispersed use is limited by topography, vegetation, water, road design and other physical barriers. The STNF also has considerable resource data in their GIS database and other records to determine where there are potential conflicts with motor vehicle travel within 100 feet of a road or trail. This preliminary screening is well within your organizational capacity and budget to perform. Please analyze motor vehicle travel up to 100 feet off road for the purpose of dispersed camping in one of the FEIS action alternatives.

6) Big Game Retrieval

None of the action alternatives propose cross-country travel solely for the purpose of big game retrieval.⁴¹ Executive Order 13443 signed by the President on August 16, 2007 directs:

“The purpose of this order is to direct Federal agencies that have programs and activities that have a measurable effect on public land management, outdoor recreation, and wildlife management, including the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture, to facilitate the expansion and enhancement of hunting opportunities and the management of game species and their habitat.

Federal agencies shall . . .

- (a) Evaluate the effect of agency actions on trends in hunting participation . . .
- (b) Consider the economic and recreational values of hunting in agency actions . . .
- (d) Work collaboratively with State governments to manage and conserve game species and their habitats . . .
- (g) Seek the advice of State and tribal fish and wildlife agencies, . . .”

Compliance with the EO and collaboration with State Department of Fish and Game is not described in the DEIS regarding the STNF’s proposal to prohibit cross-country travel for big game retrieval. Include this information in the FEIS.

ROC recommends the STNF include at least one alternative that seasonally allows cross-country travel with all-terrain vehicles (ATVs or Rhinos) for the specific purpose of big game retrieval (barring any wet weather, fire-related or other off-road closures

⁴⁰ DEIS, Volume, page 50.

⁴¹ DEIS, page 22.

already in place during the hunting season). See FSM 7715.74 and FSM 7716.13 for designations for big game retrieval. This is a reasonable accommodation to hunters if desired by the public. Vehicle operators causing damage to national forest resources can be cited. If cross-country travel is not allowed, describe the social/economic and environmental effects of prohibiting ATV use for big game retrieval in the FEIS.

7) Non-highway Legal Vehicle Travel within Developed Recreation Sites and Campgrounds

The DEIS does not consider any ML 4 or 5 roads for combined use or address the impact of prohibiting non-highway legal vehicle travel within developed recreation sites such as campgrounds. Please analyze motorized mixed use on ML 4 and 5 roads currently used by OHVs for egress/ingress to access NFTS roads outside the site. In the Forest's MVUM, ROC recommends the STNF adopt a 5 mph speed limit for non-highway legal vehicles (if not all vehicle classes) within developed recreation sites. Concern over excessive noise, public safety, and visitor conflicts can be avoided by requiring OHV operators to "idle in" and "idle out" of developed campgrounds where this is allowed. There is no reason to go any faster.

Prohibit non-highway legal vehicle travel within developed sites where there are no adjacent NFTS roads to ride on. In this scenario, users would have to trailer their OHVs and drive to a NFTS route/staging area to off load. Do not encourage OHV use on private land without the concurrence of the landowner or land management entity.

8) Other Comments on the Recreation Section (3.3)

DEIS, Volume 1, Page 68, Measurement Indicator 3: Motorized Recreation Opportunity.

The number of miles for each class of vehicle is not a useful indicator of the motorized recreation opportunity or the quality of the opportunity for non-highway legal vehicle travel. OHV users are looking for "time in the saddle" or quality, long distance rides and routes with varying difficulty levels according the National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council.⁴² Mileages alone do not indicate if these kinds of opportunities are provided. Many riders would like to travel across the STNF on a connected system of OHV trails and NFTS and other roads. In reviewing the maps for Alternative 5, there are still major gaps in the proposed system for non-highway legal vehicle travel.

The DEIS attempts to evaluate "Quality of Trail Experience" on page 68 by using "Number of miles by trail class and degree of difficulty." However, this indicator is not used for evaluating the alternatives. Instead, page 72 rates "Quality of Trail Experience" by the "Number of facilities provided as a surrogate for number of dispersed sites access." The indicators in the Recreation section are not consistently evaluated under each alternative.

In the FEIS, please analyze the alternatives using the indicator below.

⁴² From NOHVCC OHV plan training materials.

Proposed Indicator for *Quality of Trail Experience*: The Forest's OHV system provides numerous opportunities for long-distance touring (> 30 miles) across the STNF using connected NFTS, private and county roads, and motorized trails.

9) Seasons of Use

Please describe in the FEIS how the STNF will implement your proposed "Seasons of Use" strategy so the public has a reasonable chance of understanding and complying with the new rules. It appears to be a law enforcement challenge.

10) Implementation Schedule for Pre-Mitigation Measures

According to Appendix D, many unauthorized routes require pre-mitigation prior to opening them for public motorized use and displaying on your MVUM. Please include a schedule in the FEIS when all pre-mitigation measures will be implemented for each alternative. Describe the cost to perform the mitigation and how this work will be accomplished. Unless this schedule is provided, the public does not know when/if the proposed route additions or changes to the NFTS will truly be available for motor vehicle use.

11) Environmental Consequences of the Alternatives

General Comments: ROC believes the overall impacts from adding unauthorized routes are so minor, that when aggregated with other impacts occurring across the forest landscape (existing NFTS roads/trails, vegetation management, wildfires, mining, grazing, etc.), they are imperceptible and discountable. These routes are already in place and are being used. Ground disturbance and other resource impacts have already occurred and will likely remain the same if designated. The adverse effects from route designation are minor compared to the impacts from cross-country travel, which will now be prohibited. Overall, the effects from designation are an improvement over the existing situation since most unauthorized routes will be closed to motor vehicle travel. Chapter 3, "Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences" section should clearly describe the context of the proposed route additions (15.56 to 106.12 miles) in light of all these other activities.

Cultural Resources: This section was difficult to follow and understand. Nine unauthorized routes ". . . will require partial or complete survey prior to the project decision."⁴³ Table 3.05-3 indicates 112 routes under Alternative 5 have not been surveyed. Table 3.05-5 shows 39 unauthorized routes require a field visit. Until these surveys are conducted, the public cannot understand and comment on the environmental effects.

Non-native Invasive Plant Species: Under Alternative 5, 212 unauthorized routes were assigned a "high risk" ranking because of a lack of recent surveys along them. They are "considered at high risk for weed introduction and spread" if added to the NFTS.⁴⁴ This assumption is unreasonable and lacks a scientific basis. Risk ratings should be assigned based on valid field inventories. Please conduct these field reviews and

⁴³ DEIS, Volume 1, page 303.

⁴⁴ DEIS, Volume 1, page 399.

describe the findings in the FEIS. As with the Cultural Resources section above, there is incomplete and missing information in this section for the public to fully understand and comment on the environmental effects.

Comparison of Alternatives and Relative Risk Rankings: These rankings are very subjective and unscientific. For example in Table 3.04-70, the Wildlife rankings for Alternative 3 is 5 (least impact) while Alternative 5 is 2 (great impact). There are minor differences between these two alternatives from looking at the indicators in Table 3.04-69. Yet the rankings imply they are significant!

Among the four action alternatives, there are minor differences in the environmental consequences as few unauthorized routes are proposed for designation (15.53 to 106.12 miles). However, the risk rankings (based on a score of 1 to 5) indicate major differences in risk. ROC recommends you delete all of these tables from the FEIS as they are not helpful in comparing the alternatives.

12) ROC's New Action Alternative

Significant issue statement #1, "Reduce Motorized Access and Recreation Opportunity" in the DEIS states:

"The proposed action will adversely affect the quality of motorized recreation and provides insufficient public access to STNF lands. The prohibition of cross-country travel, restrictions below the high-water mark of the reservoirs and the addition of only 44 miles of routes to the NFTS unfairly limits motorized recreation."⁴⁵

We believe there is an inadequate range of action alternatives in the DEIS to respond to the significant issues in compliance with NEPA Regulations, which require:

"Alternatives included the proposed action.

(a) Rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives, and for alternatives which were eliminated from detailed study, briefly discuss the reasons for their having been eliminated.

(b) Devote substantial treatment to each alternative considered in detail.

Forest Service regulations specify the following in developing and analyzing alternatives.

"The EIS shall document the examination of reasonable alternatives to the proposed action. An alternative should meet the purpose and need and address one or more significant issues related to the proposed action."⁴⁶

"Reasonable alternatives to the proposed action should fulfill the purpose and need and address unresolved conflicts related to the proposed action. Be alert for alternatives suggested by participants in scoping and public involvement activities."⁴⁷

After the receipt of public comments on the DEIS, the agency shall:

⁴⁵ DEIS, page 12.

⁴⁶ 36 Code of Federal Regulations 220.5(e).

⁴⁷ Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, 14.

“Response to comments.

(a) An agency preparing a final environmental impact statement shall assess and consider comments both individually and collectively, and shall respond to one or more of the means listed below, stating its response in the final statement. Possible responses are to:

- (1) Modify alternatives including the proposed action.
- (2) Develop and evaluate alternatives not previously given serious consideration by the agency.
- (3) Supplement, improve, or modify its analysis.
- (4) Make factual corrections.
- (5) Explain why the comments do not warrant further agency response . . .”⁴⁸

The lack of an acceptable range of action alternatives is demonstrated by Alternative 5, which proposes the most opportunities for motorized recreation among the four action alternatives. However, ROC considers it a “minimalist” alternative. The site-specific effects of such a significant reduction in public access has not been adequately disclosed in the DEIS for NEPA sufficiency. It would have been reasonable and viable to consider 1-2 other action alternatives with increased motorized recreation opportunities.

Shasta-Trinity National Forest	<i>Alt. 1 – No Action (or Current Status Quo)</i>	<i>Alt. 5 – Improved Access and Motorized Recreation Opportunities</i>	<i>Alt 5 - Percent of Forest Total</i>
Acres available for cross-country travel	1,599,062	43,702	27.3%
Acres of open OHV riding areas	unknown	0	0%
Miles of unauthorized roads and trails added to the national forest transportation system	1,252 inventoried	106 proposed to add	8.4%
Number of dispersed recreation sites with motor vehicle access	5,219	223	4.3%
Miles of ML 3 roads proposed for combined use (all vehicles)	Mixed use currently occurs on most 785 miles of ML 3 roads 1/	30.4	3.9%
Miles of ML 3 roads converted to high clearance roads to allow mixed use (all vehicles)	0	0	0%

Alternative 1 does not contribute towards your range of alternatives since it is infeasible to select and implement.

⁴⁸ NEPA Regulations in 40 CFR 1503.4.

“Under Alternative 1, the Travel Management Rule would not be implemented, and no motor vehicle use map (MVUM) would be published.”⁴⁹

Please analyze a new Action Alternative (# 6) that provides a better balance between motor vehicle access, affordability and environmental protection in response to significant issue statement #1. Add a significant issue to address the affordability of your NFTS. This alternative has the following elements:

- a) Based on valid traffic data, reclassify most of the STNF’s unpaved ML 3 roads to ML 2 to better align your road system with projected annual road maintenance costs and current vehicle use.
- b) Convert many of your ML 2 roads to motorized trails (open to all vehicle classes) to, again, better align your road system with projected annual road maintenance costs.
- c) Designate all ML 2 and unpaved ML 3 roads for motorized mixed use (all vehicles) unless a rare exception exists that cannot be mitigated.
- d) The adoption of a) through c) above will eliminate short OHV roads and trails that go nowhere when they terminate at the intersection of a road where non-highway legal vehicles are prohibited.
- e) Allow side-by-side vehicles (54 inches wide) on all “ATV trails” which are formally defined as 50 inches or less in width. It would be imprudent to prohibit “Rhino-type” vehicles on these trails because they exceed the width definition by a mere four inches.
- f) Include all combined use/mixed use assessments (engineering reports) in an Appendix to the FEIS so the public understands why some routes may not be recommended for mixed use.
- g) Provide access to all historically used recreation sites unless there is no evidence of recent use.
- h) Allow parking 30 feet from a designated route and allow vehicle access for dispersed camping within 100 feet from a designated route consistent with FSM 7715.74, FSM 7716.1, and FSM 7716.13.
- i) Allow cross-country travel by ATVs only for the sole purpose of big game retrieval during the hunting season if desired by the public for certain zones or all zones. Prohibit cross-country travel at all other times except at the three reservoirs.
- j) Close unneeded roads to reduce your road maintenance costs and mitigate road-related resource impacts.

We also request you:

⁴⁹ DEIS, Volume 1, page 22.

Provide an additional 45 day public comment period on the FEIS so the public can review the many changes from the DEIS and submit their comments prior to issuance of the Record of Decision.

Print enough hard copies of your FEIS maps for those who need them to understand your proposals and provide meaningful comments.

Conclusion: Again, thank you for the opportunity to submit ROC's comments. I would like to receive a hard copy of the FEIS and the Alternative 1 and "preferred alternative" maps when it is issued.

Sincerely

/s/ Sylvia Milligan

SYLVIA MILLIGAN
Chair, Recreation Outdoors Coalition

Enclosures:
Exhibit 1: Proven Principles for Travel Management Planning

cc:
Angela Coleman, Deputy Regional Forester
Gregg Mumm, BlueRibbon Coalition
Don Amador, BlueRibbon Coalition
Dave Pickett, American Motorcyclist Association
Robert Reed, John Stewart, and Amy Granat, California Association of 4 Wheel Drive Clubs, Inc.
Fred Wiley, Off Road Business Association
Bill Dart
Ken Knull, Friends of the High Lakes
Tom Crimmins, National Off-highway Vehicle Conservation Council
Daphne Greene and Phil Jenkins, CA. Off-highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division
Humboldt County Board of Supervisors
Shasta County Board of Supervisors
Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors
Tehama County Board of Supervisors
Trinity County Board of Supervisors
Congressman Wally Herger
Congressman Dan Lungren
Congressman Tom McClintock
Congressman George Radanovich